

PEP – ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT MEMORANDUM NO. ESM03-4

To: Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: Willie R. Taylor, Director
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

Subject: Procedures for Implementing Public Participation and Community-Based Training

The requirements in this Environmental Statement Memorandum (ESM) are being issued under the authority provided to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) by 381 Departmental Manual (DM) 4.5B, to convey instructions and guidance through its Environmental Memoranda Series, and by 516 DM 6.2, which authorizes OEPC to provide advice and assistance to the Department on matters pertaining to environmental quality and for overseeing and coordinating the Department's compliance with NEPA, the CEQ regulations, and 516 DM 4.22, which authorizes OEPC to provide further guidance concerning NEPA.

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance to bureaus and offices on implementing public participation and community-based training as part of NEPA analyses.

2. Public Participation

Public participation is the involvement, as early as possible, in the NEPA process of persons and organizations having an interest in any Departmental activity which must meet the requirements of NEPA. Public participation also includes the pro-active efforts of Departmental personnel to locate and involve the public.

3. Community-Based Training

Community-based training requires the active efforts of Departmental personnel in training persons and organizations so that these persons and organizations can more fully participate in the NEPA process.

4. Procedures

a. Bureaus shall build public participation into their NEPA procedures so that the process of involving the public is part of the first actions taken when

beginning NEPA compliance.

- b. Public participation should be conducted often and prior to development of draft alternatives and other early project documents.
- c. Use local partnerships, facilitated meetings, collaborative workgroups, and other mechanisms to provide a timely exchange of information with the public so that the scoping process and follow-up activities continue to reflect the public's input. The public should be included as soon as possible to obtain their ideas and comments. Bureaus should share their public participation methods with each other to develop and improve the process.
- d. Bureaus shall develop training methods and courses for community-based planning and the use of the NEPA process.
- e. This training must be available for both bureau staff and the key segments of the involved public. It is recognized that not all interested publics will want or need this training. However, those planning on following the project's development to completion will certainly benefit from training.
- f. Bureaus shall inventory existing training programs so as not to duplicate something already available and shall review existing and proposed training programs to assure unity and consistency in their conduct.
- g. Training programs will need to reach out to communities to foster high levels of participation, identify the appropriate role of contractors or other third parties, and consider when to offer such training (e.g., only with high profile cases).

5. Management Training

- a. Within three years of the date of this memorandum, any DOI employee holding a public meeting for the purpose of addressing NEPA compliance must have participated in training as shown in b. below.
- b. Training must be in use of the collaborative approach, meeting facilitation, fostering partnerships, negotiation, and alternative dispute resolution.
- c. The subjects in b. above may be found in separate or combined courses. Employees must be able to show by course documentation that the completed training covers these topics whether they are contained in one or several courses.